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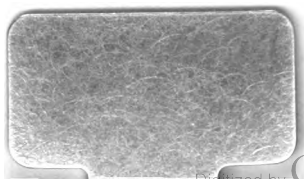
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A short Easter mystery play, the company of the holy women ...

Henry Formby



A Short Easter Mystery Play.

THE
COMPANY OF THE HOLY WOMEN
COMPANIONS OF JESUS.

4
A DRAMA, WITH CHORUS AND MUSIC.

BY THE
REV. H. FORMBY.



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

1881.

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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

A Short Easter Mystery Play.

THE COMPANY OF THE HOLY WOMEN
COMPANIONS OF JESUS.

A DRAMA, WITH CHORUS AND MUSIC.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LEADER OF THE FIRST SEMI-CHORUS, and followers.
LEADER OF THE SECOND SEMI-CHORUS, and followers.
MARY CLEOPHAS.
MARY MAGDALENE.
MARY, supposed to be the Mother of Mark.
DEBORAH, an aged Prophetess.
SALOME, and others of the Holy Company.

PROLOGUE.

SEMICHORUS I.

LOST are the hopes of Israel ! fallen is our glory !
The wonder-working Prophet from the land of Galilee—
He who was mighty in both word and deed,
Who went about through all our towns and villages
Followed by His disciples ; He before whose path
All who had sick-ailing kinsfolk in their dwellings
Brought them forth lying on their couches, and He healed them—
Doth now lie buried in yon fresh-hewn tomb.
Fondly we thought that in Him all the promises
Which the Lord God of Hosts had spoken to His people,
That their seed should be as the sand of the sea-shore for multitude,
That could you count the stars of Heaven's firmament,
So you might try to count the hosts of Israel.
And that in Him, too, all earth's varied people
Should find their soul's health and their benediction !
Now doth He lie still and motionless in yonder tomb.

SEMICHORUS II.

The glory is gone from Israel ! Weep, ye heavens !
 Mourn for His death, ye everlasting hills ;
 Mine eyes do fill with tears, I am weary of my groaning,
 My heart is cast down to the ground ; for the sin of my people
 Is grievous in the sight of God. O Jerusalem,
 Thou hast turned thyself against thy Lord ; thou hast forsaken Him.
 His blood has been poured out ; the earth hath drunk
 Thy brother's blood, O city. Behold it cries against thee !
 O blood ! that in thy madness thou hast ta'en upon thee,
 It shall cause thee to become a fugitive and a vagabond,
 A proverb and a byword, an astonishment among all people,
 Whither the anger of thy God shall drive thee. Ah, woe is me !
 The Mighty One of Israel is fallen ; in that lone sepulchre
 Do all our hopes lie buried. O woe ! unutterable woe !

SEMICHORUS I.

O cruel rage and jealousy of Israel's Priesthood !
 Did ye not then know, blind men, that He was guiltless
 Of all the crimes whereof ye falsely did accuse Him ?
 Were ye not put to shame when ye did behold
 How the uncircumcised judge, the Roman Pilate,
 Brought water, and washed his hands before you, in token
 That in his inmost soul he read your fell desire
 To bring this innocent all-spotless Victim's blood
 Down on your guilty heads. He would have set Him free,
 But you, ye generation of envenomed vipers,
 Ye cried out " Crucify Him " till your voices did prevail ;
 And this same heathen judge, in whose secret breast
 There reigned a very shame and scorn for you, did yield
 A forced and sad compliance to your will.
 Ah me ! whither shall I turn ? How shall I banish
 The memory of that blessed Lady's speechless sorrow,
 As she did stand, meek, silent, by His Cross ;
 And seemed, in truth, as one who did partake
 In all He deigned to suffer. Oh, what gentle love was there,
 Contrasted with what black ingratitude !
 O ye heavens, be ye rent in twain ! and you, ye clouds,
 Come down and hide from view a sight so terrible.

SEMICHORUS II.

And yet, the arm of Him that dwelleth 'twixt the cherubim
 Is not shortened to save ; nor hath Israel's Lord
 Learned to sleep and slumber : did we not all hear
 That last dread cry, in which ere He did yield the ghost
 He said, "'Tis finished." O words of weight and mystery !
 O words not spoken to the winds, full of deep meaning !
 Who knoweth the mind of God, and who hath been His Counsellor ?
 Hath then the Lord e'er spoken His decrees in vain ?
 Did ever word of His return unto Him void,
 Without accomplishing that whereunto He did send it ?
 Hath He then finished His work, and will He forsake
 Him by whom He finished it ? Was not then Jonas
 Cast into the raging and tempestuous sea
 Before he had begun His work—was he forsaken ?
 Did not the depth close round about him, and yet Thou, O Lord,
 Didst bring his life up from corruption ? Shall we not then
 Remember how our father Abraham did believe,
 That He who had commanded him to slay his son could
 Raise him from the dead ? Why should we be comfortless ?
 Why should we coldly think that yonder tomb
 Doth cover all our hopes ? No ! though the fig-tree doth not bloom,
 Though the labour of the olive fail, and the flock
 Be cut off from the fold, we will joy in the Lord !
 We will rejoice in the God of our salvation !

The Chorus then unite to sing the following chorale, executing the first and last stanzas all together, but dividing into two semichoruses for stanzas 2, 3, 4, 5.

CHORALE SUNG BY THE CHORUS OF THE HOLY WOMEN.

(Ira justi Conditoris.—Caswall's version.)

(N.B.—The first and last Stanzas sung by all, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 alternately by a Semichorus.)



1. He who once in righ-teous ven-geance Whelm'd the world be-neath the flood.
2. Blest with this all-sav-ing show-er, Earth, thy beau-ty straight re-sume ;
3. Scor-pions cease, thou sli-my ser-pent, Lay thy dead-ly poi-son by.
4. Oh the wis-dom of th'E-ter-nal, Oh its depth and height di-vine ;
5. When be-fore the Judge we trem-ble, Con-sci-ous of His bro-ken laws,
6. Prince and Au-thor of sal-va-tion, Lord of Ma-jes-ty su-preme,



1. Once a - gain in mer - cy cleansed it With the stream of His own blood,
2. In the place of thorns and bri - ers Myr - tles spring and ro - ses bloom ;
3. Sav - age beasts of cru - el in - stinct, Lose your wild fe - ro - ci - ty,
4. Oh the sweet-ness of that mer - cy Which in Je - sus Christ doth live,
5. May His blood in that dread mo - ment Cry a - loud and plead our cause ;
6. Je - su, praise to Thee be gi - ven By the world Thou didst re - deem,



1. Com - ing from His throne on high On the pain - ful Cross to die.
2. Bit - ter worm-wood from the waste, In - to hon - ey change thy taste.
3. Wel - com - ing the gen - tle reign Of the Lamb for sin - ners slain.
4. Slaves we were con - demned to die, See He pays the pen - al - ty.
5. Bid our guil - ty ter - rors cease, Be our par - don and our peace.
6. With the Fa - ther and the Spi - rit, Reign - ing in e - ter - nal mer - it.

(The curtain falls.)

SCENE I.

The curtain rises, and shows the three Marys—M. Magdalene, Mary of Cleophas, and the "other Mary"—taking a last look at the tomb.

Mary Cl. Sisters in mourning, I know not what strange power binds me to this spot. I cannot quit it. Yet 'tis time we were gone to our homes in the city. The Sabbath is beginning to dawn, and if we tarry much longer the entrance to the city will be closed against us. Behold, all our company is now gone, and it were meet that we followed in their steps. What should we do if we found the gates shut?

Mary Magd. But how can we leave this spot? He whom we so faithfully followed in life; He who spake to us as never man spake before; He who ever showed honour to us, poor sinners as we are, and honour such as we never received from any other man; He who never haughtily turned Himself away from us, but ever graciously accepted the poor service which it has been our joy to render to Him, now lies in this tomb. Surely it were fitting we should pass the night here in holy vigil and prayer.

Mary Cl. Fain would I do so. As with you, so also my heart within me whispers to me and says, We ought to linger here. And in good sooth I know not how to rise and go hence. For, whether I will or no, my eyes seem to remain fixed upon yon stone, which hardly, with one great united effort did they

at length roll to the door of the tomb where they have laid Him, who was all the joy and hope of our lives.

Mary III. 'Tis all true, sisters, that you say ! How can we tear ourselves away from this most sacred spot, where there seems to breathe in the very air around us such a sweet balm of peace ? The true odour and perfume of Eden appears, as it were, to come forth from that holiest of tombs.

Mary Magd. (lost in her own thoughts). Can it then be true that all I see before me is real ? Am I then in truth awake, or is it not rather true, that all that appears to me to have come to pass, is some dreadful dream ? Can it then be in very deed the sad reality, of the which there is no undoing, and from which there is no escape, that He from whom we hoped so much doth really lie cold and still behind that stone ?

Mary III. (wrapt in her own thoughts, and not hearing Mary Magdalene's words). I bethink myself that surely the Angels of God must be keeping their watch around it. Be it or be it not a dream that is stealing over my senses—I know not—but the still evening air seemeth to me to be gently stirred with their wings. An inward feeling, as it were like to that of the sweet and holy rest of the Sabbath, constraineth me to remain here.

Mary Magd. Ah, sisters ! it is for you, who have not been the guilty one that I have been, to scent the sweet fragrance of the garden of Eden floating in the air. Alas, I—poor I—can only know that there lies buried in that tomb the Man of God, who would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax ; and who, in His mercy, did not spurn from His presence the sorrowing repentant sinner. Even in death ! how can I tear myself away from the grace and mercy that seem even yet to breathe from His tomb ?

Mary III. Alas ! Mary, we are all but poor sinners who have sadly fallen short of the justice of God. “ There is none,” cries holy David, “ that doeth good, no not one.” And did not He that is dead Himself say, “ that He came to call not the just but the sinners to repentance ” ? Did He not also say to us, that there was joy in heaven among the Angels of God for one sinner that doeth penance, more than over ninety and nine just men that need not penance ?

Mary Magd. O assurance of most unspeakable grace ! Of a truth He did utter these most comforting words. O misery, to have to be torn away from abiding near to Him even in death. Can then all that I see before me have indeed come to pass ? Surely my poor brain is swimming round ! I must be in some dreadful trance. Have I then really to rise up and quit this most holy and most sacred spot ?

Mary Cl. Yes, sisters in sorrow ! we must e'en perforce remember that it behoveth matrons of Israel, not to be as the Gentile women wandering away from their homes at nightfall outside the city walls. Though my heart is indeed all with you to remain, still we may not forget that we are of the chosen

face of Israel. We may not give occasion of scandal to the Gentiles, who mock at our holy Sabbath day, to point the finger of scorn at us. Sisters in sorrow, whatever it may cost us, come let us rise and return home. The shades of the evening are closing in.

Mary Magd. Oh then let me take one more sad sorrowing look at the tomb in which all our hopes lie buried, and then I will go with you.

[Mary Magdalene approaches nearer to the tomb, kneels, kisses the ground before it, then takes a last look at the stone before the door, after which she rises and says—

Now, sisters, rise, let us all go hence. But when the first day of the week is come, we will all return here again, after we have kept the Sabbath ; and then we will bring sweet spices to anoint Him. What a Sabbath day for Him in the grave—and what a day of bereavement and desolation for us ! Come, let us go.

[The two Marys rise, and they retire. Curtain falls.]

SCENE II.

The curtain rises and discloses a company of the holy women seated, resting on the Sabbath day in the house of Mary Cleophas. Among them are the former two Marys and an aged prophetess of the name of Deborah.

Deborah. How happy, children and sisters, is the day of Israel's holy rest, which the Gentile people do not know. After all the hard trials you went through yesterday, and all the cruel deeds you witnessed, what a blessed thing it must be for you to have a law of the Lord God of Israel to obey, which commands you to keep this day holy as a day of rest and consolation for your souls.

Mary Cl. Good Mother Deborah, we are all of us as you see very sad and cast down : indeed, we are in consternation and dismay. I have brought all these good women together here, and I have besought you of your charity to come among us to speak to us some words of holy comfort and hope.

Deborah. After all you went through yesterday, good daughters, you must certainly feel the want of some clear token that the Lord God of Israel, notwithstanding, still cares for His people ; and such a token, dearest children, is this holy Sabbath day of Israel. You remember what the Lord God has said to us by Moses, “ This Sabbath shall be a sign between me and you.”

Mary Cl. Good Mother Deborah, we know you to be a wise and devout mother in Israel, and I pray you to console us. We have seen things done yesterday in Jerusalem, enough to make the strongest heart faint, and certainly enough to tempt poor weak women, such as we are, to think that the Lord God must surely have altogether cast off His people Israel.

Several Voices. Good Mother Deborah, if you can but say some kind words

of comfort to us, how gladly will we not listen to you ; and how shall we ever be able to thank you as you deserve, if you can in any way lighten the burden of our sorrow !

Deborah. But, good daughters, if I am to speak to you, you must not give way to your sorrow and let yourselves be so entirely cast down ; and then I shall have something to say to you that will be some kind of comfort, respecting this holy Prophet of Galilee whose faithful companions you have been so long.

Several Voices. O good kind Mother Deborah ! do speak to us and comfort us if you can, for all that is before us is nothing but sorrow, sorrow, sorrow, nay sorrow upon sorrow,—not even so much as one little ray of light or hope appears anywhere.

Deborah. Now, daughters, you must learn not to say such words as these, which would better beseem the sorrow of unbelieving Gentiles. Matrons of Israel should remember that the arm of the Lord is never shortened that He cannot save. We cannot know all the ways of God, and what is darkness to us to Him is light.

Mary Cl. Then, Mother Deborah, are we to understand that you bid us think that the Lord God of Israel has some exceeding great purpose of His own in the dreadful deed which was done yesterday, the which, if we could but comprehend it in our poor minds as it is known to His all-seeing mind, our sorrows would be changed to joy ?

Deborah. Nay, good Mary, do, pray, not let your tongue run on quite so fast. Bethink yourself what you are saying ! What am I, a poor lone widow in Israel, that I should be able to reveal to you the secret counsels of the Lord God of Israel ? It may be true that I do not depart from the temple day and night, but still the Lord God does not commonly choose such as I am to whom to reveal His secret counsels.

Several Voices. Nay, good kind Mother Deborah, but both the tones of your voice, as well as your looks also, tell us that you have some good comfort in store for us. Oh, do not delay to make it known to us.

Deborah. Well, but, dear daughters, be sure that you do not look for too much. What such a poor lone widow as I am has had light given to her to understand, I will gladly say to you, but do not expect more than this.

Many Voices. O mother, good kind mother, do but speak to us, and we will be satisfied. If you have any good and sweet words of comfort for your poor broken-hearted daughters, pity the sorrow in which you see us and speak to us.

Deborah. Well then, dearest daughters, first of all we must calm down this agitation and this terror-stricken sorrow. Bethink yourselves that as long as the Lord God of Israel is on His throne in heaven, the right must in the end prevail on earth.

A leading Voice. Oh, but good mother, what is it that we have not seen ? This

holy Prophet of Galilee, whom we and great multitudes with us all believed to have been He who should have redeemed Israel ; have we not seen Him, only yesterday, suddenly seized by the High Priest and the Elders of Israel, brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, sentenced to die on the Cross, taken away and there and then nailed to the Cross, dying upon it, taken down from it, and laid in His tomb ? And all this done in one day, between a sunrise and a sunset, without so much as one to speak a word for Him ; all, all either leaving Him or turning against Him, then crying out for Barabbas to be set free and for Him to be crucified ! Good mother, how can we poor feeble women help being cast down, aye, and cast down too to the very ground ?

Deborah. Well, good daughters, it is quite true as you say, that we are nothing but poor feeble women-folk ; and the rulers of Israel have done a very wicked deed, so evil that the sun was darkened that it might not see their sin ; but do not let us lose our hope in God on this account. Remember what holy Anna, Samuel's mother, has said, "The Lord killeth ;" but she adds, "He also maketh alive"—"He bringeth down to the grave"—but "He also bringeth back again." Believe me, you shall yet see great things brought to pass. All is not come to an end, as you in your grief give way to think. The wisest of men says, "There is no counsel against the Lord," and man will never be able to prevail against God.

Several Voices. O mother, these are wonderful words you are saying to us, and full of most sweet hope. We pray you to go on to speak to us.

Mary Cl. Sisters dear, we must not forget our Mother Deborah's time is precious ; she cannot stay very long with us, so we must give her our best attention.

Deborah. My dearest daughters, believe me, the real reason why you are so cast down is because you think, from all you have seen yesterday, that man is now going to prevail against God. You think that because the enemies of the holy Prophet of Galilee have been allowed to take away His life, that therefore their triumph is complete. Where is your faith ? Ought you not to know, from the whole history of our people, that the help of God is never so near as when all seems to be utterly lost ?

A Voice. But, Mother Deborah, do you really see any ray of hope in this thick darkness ? Oh, tell us what it is !

Mary Cl. Nay, sister, you forget that Mother Deborah cannot call her time her own, we must not interrupt her.

Deborah. Dearest children, bethink yourselves, was not last night the night of the Passover, and was not yesterday the day of the preparation for it ? Call to mind what this supper of the Passover lamb bids us remember. How the angel of God slew every firstborn in the houses of the Egyptians, and did not come near a single house of any of our people. And again, when on the third day after this all our people had missed their way on their flight, and found them-

selves shut in by the mountains, with the sea before them barring their march forward, and Pharaoh and his army following them, did they not then all give themselves up for lost ?

Several Voices. Yes, Mother Deborah, they did.

Deborah. Now, at this very hour when they thought all was lost, was not the help of God the nearest ? Was it not then that Moses said to them, "Stand and see the great things the Lord will do this day." "As for these Egyptians, you shall see them again no more" ? Did not our people the same morning walk through the sea on dry land ; and before sunset the same day, did they not behold the Egyptian army drowned in the sea ? So you see, dear daughters, that when the Egyptians all thought they had the upper hand, and our people all thought they were lost, the help of God was the nearest : why should it not be so now ?

A leading Voice. Good Mother Deborah, blessed be your words, but you have more faith than we have ! Of a truth the Lord God of Israel can be no other now than He was then.

Deborah. There is a holy word of Scripture which says, "Our mortal thoughts are full of fear, and our calculations for the future are very uncertain" (Wisd. ix. 14), and such they must especially be whenever trouble comes upon us and finds that we have omitted to store our minds with the holy words of the great servants of God, gathered from the books of the Law and the Prophets.

Mary Cl. I fear, good mother, great trouble has come upon us, and has found us, as you say, not equal to battle with it ; therefore do you, dear mother, help us out with your better knowledge : you see we already begin to look up a little by the aid of the holy and good words you have spoken to us.

Deborah. Then now, my dear daughters, do you not be so cast down without hope, for the cause, that the envy of the High Priest and the Elders of Israel has been permitted to prevail against the life of the great Prophet of Galilee. All the prophets of God have been ill-treated by our people during their lifetime, and yet the work of God does not cease. This holy Prophet's work will not come to an end because He has been put to death. If the God in whose name He has come to us could form man out of the earth in the beginning, He can equally well bring him back from the dead. So I bid you all be of good heart, and firmly believe that you will both see and hear great things before to-morrow's sun is set.

Several Voices. O mother, good mother ! tell us what it is that makes you have such a grand and glorious hope as this. Sisters, all of you, do you hear these words ? God grant they may prove true.

Deborah. Dearest daughters, I have not now many moments that I can stay with you, but I must try to open my mind a little more to you respecting this holy Prophet of Galilee. God has shown to us, by the much greater works done by Him, that He has been with Him in a higher way than with any other prophet

who has come before Him. There are two striking prophecies of which I must tell you, and which, as it seems to me, only such a prophet as He has been could fulfil. The prophet Habacuc, speaking of Messias whom God will send in the midst of the years, says, "Death shall go before His face." This appears to me to foretell that He is to come into the world to die, and that before we can see His face turned towards us, as the Author of grace and salvation, His own death was to go before. God forgive me, poor feeble woman that I am, for thus thinking that His counsels are revealed to me; but I tell you, dearest daughters, to be of good cheer, for some of you will certainly see His face in glory before to-morrow's sun is gone down.

Many Voices. O mother, O mother! what wonderful words you are speaking.

Deborah. Yes, and I bid you all have the best hope that they will prove to be true! Do you not remember that the High Priest prophesied with his own lips, "that it was expedient that one man should die and that the whole people should not perish"? The Lord God of Israel has never accepted the sacrifice of the lives of men, the same as the gods of the nations, Moloch, Baal, and others. He commanded, indeed, our father Abraham to take his son Isaac and to slay him and offer him as a burnt-offering on the place where He would show him; but when Abraham had taken the knife to slay his son, the Angel of the Lord called to him and stayed his hand.

A leading Voice. Ah! but, good mother, yesterday there was no angel of the Lord to cry to them to hold their hands! They drove the nails into *His* hands, and, oh, the sound of their dreadful hammers still rings in our ears.

Deborah. But, dearest daughters, you do not let me speak what I was going to say. I was going to bid you bethink yourselves, that if the Lord God of Israel does accept the sacrifice of a Man, and this Man His own Prophet, He has some design of His own which is to be brought about by this death, the like of which has never been seen or known before. His accepting this sacrifice is an act so new, that we may be quite sure He intends something never before heard of to come from it. The prophet Osee has these wonderful words, "O death, I will be thy death; O grave, I will be thy destroyer," and he adds, "The consolation is hidden from mine eyes." God forgive me, a poor foolish woman, but the consolation which was hidden from the prophet's eyes I think will be given to yours.

Many Voices. God in His mercy grant it!

Deborah. Yes, daughters, I bid you be of good comfort, that you will see to-morrow the very consolation which was hidden from the prophet's eyes. Before to-morrow's sun is set you will see these words of the prophet brought to pass. So be of good cheer. My last words to you are, "To-morrow you will see great things." Now I must go and leave you. *[Rises.]*

Many Voices. O dear good mother, holy mother, do not leave us.

Deborah. I may not stay longer, dearest daughters. Once again I bid you to have hope in God and to be comforted. [Exit.]

The company all rise, and then sit down. For some time they remain silent, when Mary Cleophas rises and says—

Dear friends, you have all heard the sweet holy words that our good mother has spoken to us, and how she has bid us all lay aside our grief and look forward to to-morrow with great hope. I can add nothing to what she has said to us which would not weaken the force of her words. I propose, therefore, that before you all return to your homes, we now divide into two companies and sing alternately the 15th Psalm of holy David.

The company now divides into two groups, which sing four verses of the Psalm xv., Mary Cleophas acting as precentress.



1. Preserve me, O Lord, for in Thee have—I—put—my—trust.
I have said to the Lord Thou art my God for Thou hast no—need—of—
my—goods.
2. I set the Lord—always—in—my—sight.
For He is at my right hand—that—I—be—not—moved.
3. Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my—tongue—hath—re—joiced.
Moreover my flesh also—shall—rest—in—hope.
4. Because Thou wilt not—leave—my—soul—in—hell.
Nor wilt Thou give Thy holy—one—to—see—cor—ruption.

Curtain falls.

SCENE III.

The curtain rises and shows Mary Magdalene in the house of Mary Cleophas with others preparing their linen and spices by lamplight.

Mary Magd. Sisters, the Sabbath is passed, and the dawn of the first day of the week is at hand; let us make all the speed we can with our preparations and set out on our journey.

Mary Cl. See, good Mary, I have not been idle. It is not yet fully the time of the morning twilight, and you know that the guards will hardly as yet have opened the city gates.

Salome. But, sisters, have you given a thought as to who will roll the stone at

the mouth of the tomb back for us? You know the difficulty which all who were present at the burial had to roll it there, and yet there were strong men among them.

Mary Cl. We must see, when we get there, whom we can find to help us. The tomb, you remember, is in a garden, and this is the busy time of the year for the garden people. The labourers will be coming to their work, and we shall be sure to find some good-natured men among them who will roll away the stone for us.

Mary Magd. Perhaps, good sisters, holy Deborah's words may have come true, and then we shall not want the help of the garden labourers. The holy Angels from Heaven may come to roll it away, if indeed they have not done so already. [*She starts.*] Hark, some voice seems to whisper to me that at this very moment they are rolling the stone away. [*She goes to the window to listen.*] All is quite still! I know not, sisters, what has come over me, but I think we shall find holy Deborah's words come true. See, the day is breaking; my heart is yearning to be gone, do not let us delay.

Mary Cl. Well, all is now ready that it has been in our poor power to prepare. So in the name of the Lord God of Israel, and of all the hosts of heaven that are with Him, let us be gone.

[They gather together their spices and linen and exeunt. Curtain falls.]

SCENE IV.

The same who are approaching the sepulchre.

Mary Cl. See, sisters, the sun is risen, and the light of day succeeds to the night; soon will come those whose charity will help us to roll away the stone.

Mary Magd. (who is in advance of the rest). O sisters! Sisters! Joy! Joy! Triumph and Victory! Holy Deborah's words have come true. The Angels of God have been here. See, the stone is rolled away.

Many Voices. Mercy upon us, but the works of God are passing wonderful. Whatever will become of us, for if the Angels of God should appear to us, and we should see them, we should certainly die.

Mary Magd. I will go in and see the place where they laid Him.

[Mary M. enters the tomb.]

Many Voices. O wonders of the power and might of the Lord! Holy Deborah, thou art indeed a prophetess of the Most High.

Mary Magdalene returns.

Mary Magd. Sisters, all has come perfectly true that holy Deborah has foretold us. There are the linen clothes all in one place, and the napkin that

bound His head in another, and He is not there. All has come true that holy Deborah bid us expect, when she said, "We should see great things to-day."

Light is thrown on the stage, all turn round to see the light.

Many Voices (in accents of terror). See, the Angel of the Lord comes with a message to us.

Voice of the Angel (from the light). "Fear not! You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here! Behold the place where they laid Him. But go and tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He has said to you" (Mark xvi. 6.)

The whole company show great signs of terror and dismay.

Mary Magd. I will run and bear these tidings, that He is risen, to Peter.

[Exit Mary Magdalene.]

EPILOGUE.

The entire company of the holy women now come on to the stage and form themselves on either side as two Semichoruses, the leaders of which declaim their respective lines, after which the piece concludes with the singing the Chorale, Victimæ Paschali Laudes, or any other (English) Easter Hymn, ad libitum.

SEMICHORUS I.

The Lord is a man of war, His Name is the Mighty One ;
He hath overthrown all them that have risen up against Him.
The enemy said, I will prevail ! I will divide the spoil !
No more, they cried, shall this Deceiver speak His parables,
No longer shall He launch His bold and daring words
'Gainst them that sit in Moses' seat ; others He saved,
But we will show His poor deluded followers
Himself He could not save. Thou hast dashed in pieces
All Thine enemies, O Lord ! Thou art our strength and our song ;
Thy right hand is marvellous in power ! Who is like unto Thee,
Glorious in holiness, mighty in praise, doing wonders ?

SEMICHORUS II.

All the ends of the earth, O Lord, shall hear that Thou art risen.
Who is like unto Thee among the gods ? Who before Thee
The barriers of the grave hath ever broken ? When they hear of this,
The princes and the mighty ones of the earth shall be amazed !
Trembling shall take hold of them ; they shall melt away !

Henceforward shalt Thou be a Light unto the Gentiles,
 As Thou hast been and shalt be the Glory of Thine Israel.
 That true Israel that shall repent them of their wrong,
 And, groaning, shall make contrite lamentation,
 That though they had the Lord of Life dwelling among them,
 Not knowing Him, with wicked hands they took and crucified Him.
 But now, O Lord, Thou art risen ! Thou shalt bring them
 Unto the Mount of Thine Inheritance,—the place, O Lord,
 Which Thou hast made for Thee,—the Holy Sanctuary
 Of Thy Great Name, which now Thou hast established.

SEMICHORUS I.

Arise and shine, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come ;
 The glory of the Lord of Hosts is risen upon thee.
 Darkness covered the earth, and great darkness the people,
 But the Lord hath risen upon thee ; and His glory
 Shall be made visible in thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light,
 And the kings of the earth to the brightness of thy rising.
 The sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls ; the glory of Lebanon
 Shall be brought unto thee ; the children of them that afflicted thee
 Shall come bending unto thee. They that despised thee
 Shall bend themselves before thy feet ; they shall call thee
 The City of the Lord, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel.

SEMICHORUS II.

Awake, awake, O Jerusalem ; put on thy beautiful garments,
 O chosen Sion of the Lord : for He who is thy Saviour,
 Hath broken the chains by which His enemies thought to hold Him.
 The Philistines rushed on Thee, Sampson. Thou didst burst their bands
 Like as the thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire.
 Death hath now no more dominion over Thee. O death,
 Where is now thy sting ? O grave, where is now thy victory ?
 Bless the Lord, O my soul ; let all that is within me praise His Name.
 Let henceforth all men bless the Lord ; and let His redeemed,
 Who shall now come to Him from east and west, from north and south,
 Praise the Lord : for He is good—for His mercy endureth for ever.

VICTIMÆ PASCHALI LAUDES.

CHORUS.

Vic - ti - mæ Pasch - a - li lau - des im - mo - lent Chris - ti - a - ni. ||

* SEMICHORUS I.

Ag - nus re - de - mit o - ves X - tus in - no - cens Pa - tri,

* SEMICHORUS II.

re - con - ci - li - a - vit pec - ca - to - res || Mors et vi - ta, du - el - lo

con - flux - e - re mi - ran - do. Dux vi - tæ mor - tu - us reg - nat vi - vus

SINGLE VOICE.

Die no - bis Ma - ri - a quid vi - dis - ti in vi - a?

MARY.

Se - pul - chrum Chris - ti viv - en - tis, et glo - ri - am vi - di re - sur - gen - tis

An - ge - li - cos tes - tes, su - da - ri - um et ves - tes.

Sur - rex - it X - tus spes me - a, præ - ce - det vos in Ga - li - læ am.

CHORUS.

Sci - mus X - tum sur - rex - is - se a mor - tu - is ver - e

Tu no - bis Vic - tor Rex mi - se - re - re. A - - - - men.

Al - le - lu - ia

*DIRECTIONS FOR THE MANNER OF SINGING THE
MUSIC OF THE MYSTERY PLAY.*

N.B.—Those who are accustomed to the exclusive use of music in measure written in bars, will be quite at sea as to the manner of interpreting the music of this play, but by attending to the subjoined instructions, all difficulty will very soon disappear.

- (1.) In the place of a bar regulated by so many beats, the music is divided into rhythmical phrases in which the flow of the music altogether follows and adapts itself to the flow of the words,—the line of the verse if it be verse, the phrase of the sentence if it be prose.
- (2.) The music, phrase by phrase, has a very distinct rhythm and flow proper to itself, but to find out what this is, the rule must be to study the words. One singer may discover a partially different rhythm to another, and both may be beautiful.
- (3.) The teacher, before attempting to teach others, should first have become completely master of a flowing and melodious rhythm, which a little pains and study will discover.
- (4.) The notation determines *only* the note of the scale, not the length or duration : ♩ denotes a variable length ; ♩^\wedge a strongly-marked note, accompanied with emphasis to the word ; ♩ a shorter note. This is only quite proximate.
- (5.) The excellence of the execution consists in the clear, firm, sustained notes of the voices,—but, far more than this, in the clear articulation of the words, accompanied with their appropriate feeling and expression. The singing should be a musical declamation of the words.



